

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

from Dr. John Boreman, chairman of the Executive Steering Committee.

Greetings from the NOAA/State Fisheries Director Meeting in San Diego. You won't be surprised to know that marine recreational survey is a top topic of conversation here. I was on the agenda Tuesday briefing the state directors about our progress on the program redesign effort, and sharing ideas with them about how we might be handling the requirement for a national registry. We're shooting for the bulk of our work to be completed by next June so as you might expect, there's a lot going on. Let me share with you what I told them.

In late March, the Executive Steering Committee held our inaugural meeting in Seattle. Our top priority was populating the Operations Team. As the Operation Team is going to be responsible for identifying priorities and managing the day-to-day redesign work, we wanted to be sure all the critical disciplines were represented - stock assessment scientists, survey statisticians, fisheries managers, and anglers. We drew members from the state fish and game agencies, marine fisheries commissions, regional fishery management councils, and NOAA. We're also extremely pleased to have Dick Brame (CCA) and Rob Kramer (IGFA) on board the Operations Team as representatives of the angling community. The complete list of Executive Steering Committee and Operations Team members are attached and I encourage you to reach out to any of us.

The Operations Team has been in place for only a few weeks, but already they've been hard at work identifying critical needs. On Monday of this week they presented to the Executive Steering Committee (and we approved) a list of national and regional priorities, those issues that we need to address most urgently. These priorities were whittled down from the hundreds of recommendations that came out from National Research Council review, the National Management Framework Workshop in Denver, the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, and our regional conference calls with constituents.

Please take a look at the attached priorities list. While everyone may not agree with the order of the priorities, we've done our best to balance the needs of the scientists, managers, and anglers. I think you'll find that we're addressing the most pressing concerns.

Our next step is to get working on these priority items. The Operations Team is preparing a detailed implementation plan that will identify work teams, outcomes, budgets, and timelines. We expect to be able to share that plan with you by early June. We want to bring a broad range of expertise to the table and may tap several of you to help with a work team. Even if you're not selected to formally serve, we'll invite everyone to attend meetings and keep track of our progress. It is our continued goal to work with our partners and ensure that everyone has a say in what the improved program will look like.

One area in particular that we know we're going to have to spend time on is the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act's angler registry provision. I heard a mixture of both excitement and unease about how such a provision will be implemented. No doubt having a universal list of anglers would improve our sampling efficiency. However, I understand the concerns about how a federal system would either overlap or take the place of a state saltwater license. As part of our ongoing conversation with states, they asked us to provide some guidance on the type of information NOAA we would need. The

attached letter from Dr. Hogarth was distributed last week to each state director, fishery management council chair and executive director, and interstate commission executive director outlining our current thinking on minimum data requirements. It should help move the conversation forward.

Speaking of conversations, improving communication was another prominent topic here in San Diego. It's clear that for this effort to be successful, scientists, managers, and recreational fishermen must do a better job talking with each other. Our aggressive schedule will add to the challenge. I'll be on the road quite a bit over the next few months which will hopefully provide me the opportunity to speak with some of you. Below are a couple of the places where I and/or members of the Executive Steering Committee will be. I speak for all the members of the committee when I say we welcome your thoughts, and look forward to talking with you and getting your thoughts.

My goal is to provide you with regular updates on the progress of redesign effort. In the meantime, please continue to check the website for documents, meeting minutes, and other useful information.

Sincerely,
John Boreman
Chair, Executive Steering Committee
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